

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed June 10, 2004. To clarify various aspects of inventive subject matter, Applicants amend Claims 1, 6, 7, 8, 14, 17, and 25. Applicants also introduce new Claim 26 and cancel Claims 13, 21, and 22 without prejudice or disclaimer. To advance prosecution of this application, Applicants have responded to each notation by the Examiner. Applicants submit that all of the pending claims are allowable over the cited references. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, further examination, and favorable action in this case.

Objection to Claim 17

The Examiner objects to Claim 17 because of various informalities. Applicants have amended Claim 17 to address the informalities identified by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's statement that Claim 24 is allowed.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's statement that Claims 7, 14, and 22 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Although Applicants believe all original claims are allowable, to expedite issuance of this application Applicants have rewritten independent Claims 1, 8, 17, and 25 to include elements similar to various aspects of Claims 7, 14, and 22. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of independent Claims 1, 8, 17, and 25, and all claims depending therefrom.

Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 17-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,467,748 issued to Watanabe ("*Watanabe*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,467,748 issued to Cross ("*Cross*"). The Examiner also rejects Claims 1-6, 8-13, 15-16, 23, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Watanabe* and *Cross* as applied to Claim 17, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,385,384 issued to Rosbury et al. ("*Rosbury*"). Without addressing the veracity of the Examiner's art rejections, and solely for the purpose of advancing this case expeditiously to issuance, Applicants amend independent

Claims 1, 8, 17, and 25 to include limitations similar to various aspects of the allowable subject matter contained in Claims 7, 14, and 22. Applicants explicitly reserve the right to traverse some or all of these rejections in another application. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection and full allowance of amended Claims 1, 8, 17, and 25, and all claims depending therefrom.

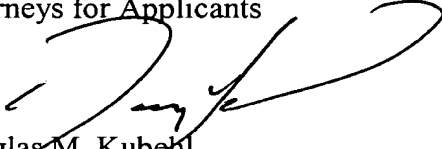
CONCLUSION

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending Claims.

Applicants believe no fees are due. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

If the Examiner feels that a conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, Douglas M. Kubehl stands willing to conduct such a telephone interview at the convenience of the Examiner. Mr. Kubehl may be reached at 214-953-6486.

Respectfully submitted,
BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
Attorneys for Applicants



Douglas M. Kubehl
Reg. No. 41,915

Date: August 10, 2004

Correspondence Address:

Customer No. **05073**